



## **Staffordshire Supporting People – User Exhibition**

This leaflet describes one of many projects funded by the Innovation into Action grant programme. This programme is funded by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) formerly the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR) and is managed by the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH). More information can be obtained from the contacts in this leaflet.

### **In the beginning!**

This exhibition was arranged by the Staffordshire SP after consultation with housing providers and service users to ensure that they are involved in the Supporting People Programme. This is one of the main themes in our Consultation and User Engagement strategy.

The event was held in January 2003 when to fit in with the guidance on Supporting People being published.

### **What is it all about?**

The aim of this project was to hold an exhibition/open day to involve supported housing tenants in the governments supporting people programme (online from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2003). The exhibition will displayed photographs taken by supported housing tenants from the different client groups covered by Supporting People. The photographs aimed to answer 3 questions 'What do you like about Supported housing?', 'What don't you like about supported housing?', 'What would your ideal housing situation look like?'.

Service users also wanted information about SP in a user-friendly medium such as video. The media studies department at Burton College agreed to a make an interesting and 'fun' video, involving both the SP and users that explains the Programme clearly.

### **The exhibition –**

The day was a great success with over 200 service users and frontline staff attending from across the county. The choice of venue was important so that services users felt comfortable and it was accessible for all.

When people registered they were given tickets for their preferred viewing time of the video in a separate 'cinema' room. These tickets were exchanged for bags of popcorn when they watched the video. To help the event feel more like an exhibition we had carrier bags printed with our log and contact telephone number on. Included in the bag was a Staffs SP leaflet, a printed pen and a brochure of the event.

The exhibition consisted of the photographs taken by service users which were printed with text onto large banners and displayed in the main theatre. To make it accessible to all the text from the accompanying printed brochure was put onto tapes so people could have walkmans as they went around. This proved to be really popular.

Staff also wore distinctive T-shirts saying 'ask me a question about Supporting People' so they could be easily identified.

SITRA and the National Housing Federation also had stands and were able to help the SP staff answer queries.

### **Evaluation of the event**

It was important for the team to get feedback so that we evaluate how successful (or not!) the event was. We also needed to know which client groups were not represented or underrepresented so that we could involve them in the future.

We wanted people to give feedback in the most appropriate way for them. Therefore they had the option of either sticking stars next to statements on a board (these statements included 'the day was interesting' or it was 'boring') or could fill in a comments form.

The evaluation of the feedback showed that 98% of people who attended thought the day was good or excellent.

The evaluation of the day will also inform our Strategy and has helped to build relationships between everyone in the Programme

### **The future**

Although the day was a success this is only the beginning of user involvement in Supporting People. We wanted to have a 'flagship' event that would indicate to everyone involved with the Programme that the team took user involvement seriously.

Since the event we have taken the video and exhibition banners out to many of our services who could not attend.

To get value for money the banners were produced so that they could be used individually and have been 'borrowed' by some of our providers for work that they are doing.

We have also sold copies of the video at cost to providers and other SP teams for them to use with service users or in training for frontline staff.

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